

BUILDING

DISASTER-RESISTANT COMMUNITIES

Charged with the complex task of navigating the changing environment of emergency management, King County led the development of a regional all-hazards approach to ensuring the safety of the Central Puget Sound region. Often led by our Office of Emergency Management, this approach provides a regional collaboration of public and private entities dedicated to upholding the importance of preparedness in our area.

Improving Homeland Security – King County facilitated the formation of a regional Homeland Security System. This collaborative effort involving cities, fire and law enforcement, hospitals, the port, government, special purpose districts, utilities, non-profits and the private sector have been charged with effectively and efficiently administering Federal Homeland Security funding that comes to the King County region.

Regional Communications and Emergency Coordination Center (RCECC) – Constructed as a survivable facility with redundant and interoperable communications features, this \$30 million state-of-the-art center is truly a regional space. In addition to the Office of Emergency Management, it holds the E911 call center and serves as a day-to-day meeting point for regional partners, county offices, and emergency management committees, trainings, and classes.



E911 – Implemented Phase I and II Wireless in all of King County. This allows cell phone callers phone numbers and locations to be displayed at the 911 operators position, greatly enhancing the ability of first responders to provide aid to requesting individuals.

King County established a back-up 911 System Selective Router. This provides for additional redundancy to the 911 system here in King County in case of emergencies and disasters that may disrupt the system's existing infrastructure.

A "Self-healing Network" was put in place for the five largest Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs). This technology allows for instantaneous rerouting of emergency calls

King County Executive Ron Sims and Sheriff Dave Reichert reassured the region on Sept. 11, 2001.

should a cable be cut that brings those calls from the telephone company to the 911 Centers.

Planning for the worst – Initiated in 1998 by King County and public and private partner agencies, the Regional Disaster Plan (RDP) was created as a framework for emergency cooperation and coordinated response. The RDP is an innovative effort serving to establish a shared concept for how multiple King County organizations and agencies work together in times of emergency or disaster.

Being ready – The King County Regional Disaster Plan was tested in March 2005, through simulation of two separate terrorist attacks on two different transportation systems.

The Office of Emergency Management has hosted and coordinated 18 trainings and exercises in 18 months dedicated to preparing county elected officials, public information officers, and other leaders for a natural, technological, or manmade disaster in the Central Puget Sound region.

Building stronger facilities - Harborview Medical Center has begun construction on a \$300 million capital program to strengthen our regional trauma center against earthquakes and to demolish older unsound buildings. King County voter-approved bonds will fund other earthquake resistant facilities and create additional beds and technology to respond in case of emergency.

Keeping the public informed – The Office of Emergency Management Web site, www.metrokc.gov/prepare, a source for emergency and disaster preparedness news and issues, serves as a clearinghouse of information for residents, visitors, and public/private partners. Other public outreach efforts include:

- *“Home Team Ready,”* a public motivation campaign, in partnership with Belo Corporation, Snohomish and Pierce Counties, the State of Washington, and the City of Seattle provides information people can use for readiness at home, the workplace, and in the community.
- *The Regional Public Information Network (RPIN)*, comprised of members from over 50 government jurisdictions, agencies and organizations that gives the public a central source for news by supplying links to safety and emergency information being released in central Puget Sound.
- *Project Impact:* Hosted by the director of the Office of Emergency Management, this successful television cable access program helps viewers prepare for emergencies and disasters.
- *Becoming a StormReady Region:* This regional effort to become a National Weather Service-certified StormReady area, comprised of King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties with the City of Seattle, makes the Puget Sound region better equipped to handle adverse weather and save lives and property in the event of a severe weather emergency.

Officials from throughout King County take part in a disaster preparedness drill at the King County Regional Communications and Emergency Coordination Center.

